



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### 7 KEY AGENCIES CALL FOR FREE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

As a new school year gets under way today, seven leading welfare organisations have come together under the *Every Kid* campaign to call on the State Government to provide two days a week free early childhood education for all children in the two years prior to school.

“NSW has the least accessible and least affordable early childhood education system in the country,” explained *Every Kid* spokesperson, Michelle Burrell from the Council of Social Service of NSW.

“10 to 20 percent of children, many of whom come from low socio-economic backgrounds, miss out on one of the most important education opportunities in their life—before they start school”.

“The state’s 778 community-based pre-schools are underfunded to such an extent that fee levels have reached an average of \$30 a day and rising” said Ms Burrell. “Although the government has given some additional resources, it goes nowhere near the \$90 million needed to make pre-school truly affordable.”

Early childhood education is also known to improve social skills in children and for many disadvantaged families, education provides the one opportunity in which they can make a better life for themselves..

“Ensuring all children have access to quality early childhood education makes sense,” explains Ms Burrell. “It not only promotes children’s growth and development, but has substantial economic benefits for society. It is estimated that every dollar spent on childcare accrues total economic benefits of more than \$8.”

The *Every Kid* campaign was formed last year to prompt action on issues of poverty and exclusion faced by disadvantaged children and young people in NSW. Members of *Every Kid* will raise the issue of early childhood education with various NSW Ministers and Shadow Ministers during meetings scheduled over coming weeks. ENDS

**Interviews: Michelle Burrell, Acting Director, NSW Council of Social Services.**

**For media inquiries and case studies, call Kelly Jones on 0408 689 499.**

Working together to make NSW a place for every child & young person to thrive [www.everykid.net](http://www.everykid.net)

